Literacy Ontario

Common Assessment in the Literacy and Basic Skills Program

Literacy and Basic Skills Section
Workplace Preparation Branch
Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities

Ontario

Common Assessment in the Literacy and Basic Skills Program

Literacy and Basic Skills Section
Workplace Preparation Branch
Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities

August 2000

101-01006/

© QUEEN'S PRINTER FOR ONTARIO, 2000

Order Information

Literacy and Basic Skills Section
Workplace Preparation Branch
Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities
900 Bay Street, Mowat Block, 23rd Floor
Toronto ON M7A 1L2

416-326-5476 Tel
416-326-5505 Fax
416-326-5493 TTY

General Public:

Publications Ontario
880 Bay Street
Toronto ON M7A 1N8

416-326-5300 Tel
1-800-668-9938 Toll free

Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data

Main entry under title:
Common assessment in the Literacy and Basic Skills Program

At head of title: Literacy Ontario.
Issued also in French under title: Une évaluation commune pour le Programme d'alphabétisation et de formation de base.
ISBN 0-7794-0117-4

1. Literacy programs—Ontario. 2. Students—Rating of--Ontario. 3. Ontario. Literacy and Basic Skills Program. I. Ontario. Literacy and Basic Skills Section. II. Title: Literacy Ontario.

LC154.2O5C65 2000 374'.0124'09713 C00-964020-7

Acknowledgements

This paper was developed by Harold Alden, Audrey Anderson, and Douglas Perry of the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, under the direction of John Stanley and Sandie Birkhead-Kirk. The document was formatted by Rebecca Crumlish and Stephen Watt.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 1

1. INTRODUCTION 5

2. COMMON ASSESSMENT IN THE LBS PROGRAM 9

3. THE FRAMEWORK FOR LBS COMMON ASSESSMENT 11

- THE PRINCIPLES OF THE LBS PROGRAM 12
- THE LEARNING OUTCOMES APPROACH 13
- GOOD ASSESSMENT PRACTICE 14
- SHARED CRITERIA FOR COMPARING ASSESSMENT RESULTS 15

4. IMPLEMENTING COMMON ASSESSMENT 23

- INTERPRETING AND COMPARING 23
- WHEN ASSESSMENT INFORMATION IS INADEQUATE 25
- RESOLVING ISSUES OF INADEQUATE ASSESSMENT RESULTS 26
- PARTNERING AS A PROCESS FOR COMPARING ASSESSMENT RESULTS 27
- EXTENDING COMMON ASSESSMENT 28
- PROVINCIAL CONSISTENCY IN LEARNING OUTCOMES 29

5. CONCLUSION 31

APPENDICES 33

* * * * *

O:\LBS\Publication\CommonAssessment\English\commonass006.doc

July 19, 2000

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Government of Ontario through the Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) Program provides support to over two hundred literacy agencies in Ontario. The LBS Program focuses on goal-directed, learner-centred literacy training that helps adult learners attain the skills necessary to attain employment, enrol in further training or education, or achieve personal independence. The program supports the Recognition of Adult Learning Strategy (RALS), a multi-year reform of literacy service delivery initiated in 1994.

The first phase of RALS—learning outcomes—is now complete. Common assessment is the second phase of RALS, and builds on the learning outcomes approach to adult literacy. Implementation of common assessment will set the stage for phase three of RALS, articulation among agencies delivering the LBS Program.

What is common assessment—and why do we need it?

Assessment—the gathering and analysis of information about the abilities, needs, interests, learning styles, and achievements of learners—is a fundamental component of literacy programming. Assessment tools and methods are the formal or informal means through which literacy practitioners gather valid, reliable, and relevant information about the progress of learners. The LBS Program does not endorse a single, specific method to assess literacy learning, but encourages LBS agencies to use a mix of assessment tools and methods that are appropriate to the goals of the learner, the nature of the agency, and the purpose of the assessment.

In order to facilitate communication among LBS agencies, enable learners to move from agency to agency without undergoing unnecessary re-assessment, and provide a common framework for interpreting and reporting learner achievements, the LBS Program developed a common assessment framework for assessing and documenting learner progress. Common assessment refers to the use by LBS agencies of comparable assessment tools and approaches, based upon the common language of learning outcomes.

Common assessment provides a method for comparing assessment results based on four foundations:

- the principles of the LBS Program;
- the learning outcomes approach;
- good assessment practice; and
- shared criteria for comparing assessment results.

Using the assessment tools understood by all LBS agencies makes it easier to interpret the assessment results among different agencies. However, no single tool

accommodates all the purposes and needs of literacy assessment. As a result, the LBS Program has supported the development of a wide range of tools to be used within the common assessment framework. The program also has provided a set of criteria with which to compare and incorporate the assessment results produced by other LBS agencies using different tools and methods.

Criteria for Common Assessment

In order to build a shared understanding of assessment results, the following questions should be asked:

- What is being assessed?
  The starting point for analysing particular assessment results within the framework of common assessment is to define the precise skills, knowledge, and behaviours that are being assessed in a way that is understandable across all LBS agencies. This aim is accomplished by using the common language of the domains, outcomes, skill sets, and learning levels established through the learning outcomes approach.

- Who is being assessed?
  The choice of assessment tool is determined by the goals of the learner and the particular characteristics or requirements of a sector or stream.

- What is the purpose of the assessment?
  The four main purposes for assessment may be identified as:
  - assisting in learning and in documenting progress;
  - facilitating transitions;
  - developing or improving the learning program; and
  - demonstrating accountabilty.

- What assumptions are guiding the assessment?
  In addition to LBS guiding principles, agencies must be aware of any other assumptions or underlying values, with respect to literacy training, that inform their assessment methods, and may therefore have an influence on the tools they choose.

- When is the assessment used?
  Learner assessment is carried on at different times throughout the instructional process. The LBS Program includes initial, on-going, and exit assessment activities.

- What is the basis of the assessment tool or method?
  Criterion-referenced tools are related to the standards required by the specific tasks being assessed, such as those performed as part of goals. These tools are especially compatible with the goal-directed, learning outcomes-based approach of

the LBS Program. Norm-referenced tools are similar to standardised tests, in which results are interpreted by comparing them to results of previous learners. Performance-based tools relate directly to learners' goals. System-based tools provide information about skills in general, without reference to any particular use that may be made of them.

- What are the standards of validity and how reliable are the results?
  Validity refers to how well the tool or method measures what it aims to measure. Reliability refers to consistency of result. An assessment tool's validity and reliability should be matched to the importance of the assessment, especially when the results of the assessment have broad gatekeeping or accountability implications.

- How are the assessment results scored?
  LBS agencies need to have clear standards and scales for scoring learner performances, so that a common interpretation on the meaning of scores based on particular tools is understood by all LBS practitioners. Learners also must be able to understand assessment criteria and performance expectations.

Working with common assessment

The key challenge for an LBS agency in ensuring a common assessment approach is understanding and accepting the assessment results of other LBS agencies for its own information needs. In order to interpret accurately and to compare assessment results, LBS agencies need to be clear about their own assessment approach, and understand what information they require when serving a learner previously with another agency.

An assessment approach is the overall strategy developed by an LBS agency for deciding when, and how, to use particular assessment tools and methods with learners, based upon a variety of important factors. These factors include:

- the nature of their learners' goals and needs;
- the purposes of assessment;
- the needs of the agency; and
- the special characteristics of the delivery sector, as well as the professional training, experience, and orientation of staff.

This approach includes the formal and informal assessment instruments and methods used, the phase of assessment in which each is applied, and the ways in which validity and reliability are determined.

In order for an LBS agency to consult on assessment with other agencies and to enlarge or modify its assessment approach as necessary, the approach must be coherent: internally logical, consistent, and easily understood. In moving to implement common assessment, LBS agencies will require more information about

the assessment approaches of other agencies.

In cases where the receiving LBS agency does not have sufficient assessment information about a learner, the agency needs to identify why it regards the information as inadequate, and then to determine the appropriate level for resolving the issue. Sometimes the perception of inadequate assessment results may arise because of gaps in the Ontario literacy field's development. (For example, there may be a gap in the tools available to the field in a particular domain or LBS level.) As well, there could be an uncharted area of assessment that awaits exploration and development.

All LBS organisations—agencies, regional networks, sectoral bodies, umbrella organisations, and service organisations—will develop shared concepts and vocabulary in order to describe common assessment, and will become more aware of the principles and practices of assessment across the field. This increased awareness and shared vocabulary will assist LBS agencies in communicating to other stakeholders of the LBS system how learners are assessed and how common assessment supports learner mobility.

Conclusion

Through assessment, LBS agencies gather, analyse, and report information about the abilities, needs, interests, learning styles, and achievements of learners. Based upon this information, the LBS agency and the learners together make judgments that assist learners to set learning goals, provide information on learning progress, and identify successful completion of the goals set out in the LBS training plan.

LBS agencies use a variety of assessment tools and methods to evaluate learner progress. The common assessment approach provides a method for comparing assessment results and establishing their portability among LBS agencies through a common language of learning outcomes. Common assessment also facilitates communication about the achievements of learners with other stakeholders of the LBS Program, such as training programs and employers. The introduction of the common assessment approach will reinforce the learner-centred nature of the LBS Program and focus literacy agencies on a key delivery service.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) Program provides learners with the opportunity to learn the literacy skills which help them attain their goals related to further training, employment, or independence. The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) supports over two hundred agencies to deliver the LBS Program at approximately three hundred sites in communities across Ontario. As part of the assistance in developing literacy skills, one of the most important services that these agencies provide to learners is literacy assessment.

Assessment refers to gathering and analysing information about the abilities, needs, interests, learning styles, and achievements of learners, and then making judgments. The judgments assist them in setting and revising learning goals, informing learners of their progress, and identifying the successful completion of the goals set out on the training plan.

Assessment is a joint activity, conducted by LBS practitioners in co-operation with learners. Assessment is recognised as fundamental to the LBS Program. It is one of five LBS Program services, which include:

- information and referral;
- literacy assessment;
- training plan development;
- training; and
- follow-up.

The LBS Program, in consultation with LBS practitioners, recognised the need to develop a common currency for literacy assessment among LBS agencies while maintaining an appropriate level of local flexibility. It therefore developed the Recognition of Adult Learning Strategy (RALS), furthering and monitoring its implementation.

As noted in Goal-Directed Assessment: An Initial Assessment Process (Ministry of Education and Training, 1997), the LBS Program does not specify a single method to assess literacy learning. Rather, a consistent language is used so that assessment results are understandable to the learner and to literacy service providers. LBS agencies develop their own assessment approaches, which recognise the differing needs of adult learners and are consistent with the principles of the LBS Program and good assessment practice. Based upon their assessment approaches, LBS agencies use the particular mix of assessment tools and methods that are appropriate to the goals of the learner, the nature of the agency, and the purpose of the assessment.

Assessment tools and methods are the formal or informal means through which LBS agencies gather valid, reliable, and relevant information about the progress and

achievements of learners. These tools and methods include demonstrations, interviews, tests, writing samples, and portfolios.

An assessment approach is the overall strategy developed by an LBS agency for deciding when, and how, to use particular assessment tools and methods with learners, based upon the goal paths of learners in the agency and the purposes of the assessments. The assessment approach helps the LBS agency determine a learner's assessment plan and integrates it with the learner's training plan. The assessment plan outlines the information to be gathered and assessed, and the particular tools and methods to be used, at each stage of the learner's progress from the initial, through on-going, and ending with exit phases of their personal LBS training program.

The ability to use a range of assessment approaches and tools has clear benefits for the learner and for the LBS agency. Foremost among these benefits is the capacity to tailor the assessment plan to the nature of the LBS agency and to the goals and needs of the individual learner.

At the same time, this flexibility poses a challenge for an LBS agency when it receives learners from other LBS agencies: What criteria and methods may the staff of the agency use to interpret the assessment results from other LBS agencies—produced by diverse assessment tools and approaches—in order to obtain the information they need to make important decisions about how to serve the learners?

The need to interpret the assessment results of other agencies is an issue for LBS agencies because of how the LBS Program is delivered. Through local service planning, the LBS agencies in a community determine the specific delivery options that each individual LBS agency will offer, working together to provide the full range of LBS services in each community. For example, each LBS agency specialises in learning activities keyed to particular learning outcomes levels and particular learner goal path. As a result of this agency-level specialisation, in many communities learners may need to gain access to several different LBS agencies within the community in order to complete all of the learning activities that make up their LBS training plans.

Lacking shared methods and criteria for interpreting the assessment results for learners who arrive from other LBS agencies, agency staff have often resorted to re-assessing the learners. Frequently, LBS agency staff members re-assess in order to avoid making inappropriate judgments about the needs and capabilities of the learner. In other cases, LBS agencies may have a formal policy of assessing all new learners, even those who arrive with evidence of a previous assessment.

Understandably, learners perceive repeated re-assessment as being made to "jump through hoops." In addition, important information about the learner's progress may be lost through discrepancies in the different assessment-re-assessment processes. Both of these circumstances are clearly contrary to the learner-centred focus of the LBS

Program.

In order for learners to move among LBS agencies and into training and employment opportunities in the community without the need for re-assessment, the agencies must be able to:

- communicate their assessment results to one another in mutually understandable formats;
- interpret the assessment results provided by other LBS agencies in terms of the agency's own assessment approach;
- report consistent and meaningful information on learner achievements to other stakeholders, such as employers or providers of specific skills training; and
- provide learners with the skills and language to self-assess so that learners understand and may explain their own achievements to others.

Common assessment is the term applied in the LBS Program to the framework that makes the above four activities possible. Common assessment refers to the use by LBS delivery agencies of comparable assessment tools and approaches, based upon the common language of learning outcomes, in order to enable learners to move among these agencies without being unnecessarily reassessed. Common assessment also facilitates communication about the achievements of learners with other stakeholders of the LBS Program, such as training programs and employers.

Common assessment is the second phase of the Recognition of Adult Learning Strategy (RALS), a multi-year reform of how literacy training is delivered in Ontario. The four phases of RALS are:

1. learning outcomes;
2. common assessment;
3. articulation; and
4. recognition.

The introduction of common assessment in the Ontario literacy field follows, and builds upon, the first phase of RALS, the implementation of learning outcomes. The implementation of common assessment will in turn make possible the third phase of RALS, the articulation of all agencies delivering the LBS Program. In the fourth phase, recognition of learning, a formal means may be developed in order to acknowledge that learners have successfully completed their studies in the LBS Program.

When RALS is fully implemented, adults will be able to move easily among agencies delivering the LBS Program, according to the requirements of their personal goals. It is clear that common assessment plays a pivotal role in the government vision for literacy. In time, assessment results will facilitate a transition to broader training, education and employment opportunities.

The purpose of this paper is to provide guidance to LBS delivery agencies regarding the ministry outlook on, and expectations for, common assessment. Two other key goals of the paper are to provide (1) suggested criteria that LBS agencies may use to interpret the assessment results of other LBS agencies, and (2) suggested steps for LBS agencies to make these interpretations and to eliminate any obstacles to the movement of learners among agencies.

This paper is intended to be used in association with, and to build upon, two related ministry documents: Goal-Directed Assessment: An Initial Assessment Process (1997) and Working With Learning Outcomes (1998). The paper presumes some familiarity with basic assessment theory and practice as it relates to the LBS learning outcomes, as presented through the training delivered in 1999 by the umbrella organisations of the Anglophone, Francophone, Deaf, and Native literacy streams. However, certain key definitions and concepts are reviewed at appropriate points throughout the paper.

2. COMMON ASSESSMENT IN THE LBS PROGRAM

At the outset, it is important to distinguish the use of the term common assessment in the LBS Program from another, frequent application of the term. In the LBS Program, common assessment refers to the use of comparable tools and approaches. In some other jurisdictions and training sectors, common assessment refers to the use of a single assessment tool, used by all agencies in that jurisdiction or sector.

Using a common assessment tool considerably simplifies the problem of achieving a common interpretation of assessment results among different agencies. However, it is unusual for a single tool to be able to accomplish more than a few purposes. A valid instrument measures what it purports to measure. When there are different skills being assessed, and for different purposes, the assessment instrument must necessarily be different. For example, an assessment instrument designed to categorise a large number of adults according to the literacy levels at which they are functioning, such as the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS), could not identify the literacy learning issues that individual adults may have. No single tool can be expected to accommodate all the important purposes of, and needs for, literacy assessment. Moreover, experience has taught us that given the diverse needs of adult learners, agencies tend to modify existing tools. Therefore, a single tool soon loses its universality.

The goal-directed, learner-centred training provided through the LBS Program incorporates a wide range of purposes for assessment. These purposes include:

- establishing the literacy levels of adults;
- identifying individual learner goals and competencies;
- measuring progress in learning activities;
- guiding program improvements; and
- demonstrating accountability to funders.

As in other areas of education, a wide range of assessment tools and methods is required in adult literacy practice to meet these differing purposes and needs. The tools and methods include tests, interviews, inventories, checklists, learning outcomes demonstrations, portfolios, and other informal, locally developed tools and approaches.

Since a wide range of tools is required, the LBS Program has supported the development of a common assessment framework with the assistance of the Ontario literacy field. This framework encourages LBS agencies to use the full range of tools and methods needed. The framework also provides clear criteria to compare the assessment results produced by other LBS agencies when using tools and methods other than their own, and to incorporate the results into their own LBS programming.

3. THE FRAMEWORK FOR LBS COMMON ASSESSMENT

There are many reasons why learners move among LBS agencies. Learners may wish to:

- study at an agency providing instruction at a higher LBS level related to their goals;
- continue their learning at a new agency after an interruption;
- carry on their studies after moving to a new area; or
- move from one-to-one learning to small group or classroom learning.

When going to a new LBS new agency, learners want and need to be able to enter with:

- no loss of recognition for previous studies;
- placement at the appropriate level in the new agency; and
- appropriate and challenging new learning activities.

How will LBS delivery agencies begin to develop common interpretations of assessment results?

The framework for common assessment in the LBS Program consists of four elements:

- the principles of the LBS Program;
- the learning outcomes approach;
- good assessment practice; and
- shared criteria for comparing assessment results.

Using these four elements, LBS agencies analyse and interpret assessment results produced by various tools and approaches other than those normally employed. Agencies are then able to determine the applicability of the results to important agency decisions about the learner, such as:

- whether the agency's programming is suitable for a particular learner, or if the learner should be referred to an agency offering more appropriate programming;
- whether additional assessment information is required, either from the referring agency or through supplementary assessment;
- the LBS level at which the learner is functioning in critical goal-related skills; and
- the specific skills gaps that the learner and the agency need to address.

The framework for common assessment applies to all assessment tools and approaches in use in the LBS Program, no matter how they may vary from one another.

The principles of the LBS Program

When LBS agencies refer to a set of common principles in deciding what to assess and how to assess it, there is greater consistency and comparability among their assessment approaches and results.

There are four main principles supporting the LBS Program:

1. Services based on adult education principles

A key principle of adult education is that adults respond to learning opportunities that meet their needs as adults. The LBS Program assists adult learners to focus on real-life tasks and problems. Learning activities in the LBS Program prepare them to carry out demonstrations closely related to the real-life content of their goals. As a result, learners are able to apply newly acquired skills to their immediate lives.

The LBS Program assists adults to become lifelong learners. The program provides learners with the opportunities within the context of literacy programming to develop independence, critical-thinking skills, and problem-solving skills–skills critical for employability and lifelong learning.

2. Learner-centred services

Consistent with adult education principles, the LBS Program provides learner-centred services. This LBS principle includes supporting learners in developing achievable goals related to further training, employment, or independence. It also means providing literacy services appropriate to assisting learners in reaching their goals. In a complementary way, the core approach in the LBS Program is goal-directed assessment: what is assessed is determined by learners' goals.

Goal-directed assessment is a collaborative process. The Core Quality Standards for LBS delivery agencies guide agencies to involve learners in assessment on an on-going basis. The learner's participation in the assessment process helps to develop important skills of self-assessment. In this way, learners increase their understanding of and control over their achievements. This valuable skill is transferable to any learning situation.

3. Results-based focus

The LBS Program focuses on observable results: the achievements of learners in learning skills related to their goals. Learner assessment based upon learning outcomes is a key means of achieving observable results.

For LBS delivery agencies, learning outcomes-based assessments indicate the results for the activities of their learners. These results may easily be compared across LBS agencies. The ability to compare results assists agencies to support learner mobility and to demonstrate program accountability. Moreover, since the information is compiled in a standard form within the agency, it is useful for providing the results to other education and training programs or to potential employers.

4. Linkage with the broader education and training system

The LBS Program is part of the continuum of education and training opportunities available to Ontario adults. As such, it does not duplicate but rather complements the broader education and training system.

The easy portability of assessment results based upon the common language of learning outcomes strengthens the linkages between the program and the broader education and training system. Learners are able to gain access to credit study, specific skills training, upgrading, and other education and training opportunities.

In the current employment environment, LBS learners bound for the job market need to be prepared to change their career directions at various times over their working lives in response to economic shifts and social changes. Assessment results based upon learning outcomes are flexible and apply to various goal paths. However, they must reflect a consistency of approach and adherence to the broader government vision for adult literacy.

The learning outcomes approach

We have examined how the principles of the LBS Program help to shape the assessment practices carried on within the program. Another fundamental aspect of the LBS Program is the learning outcomes approach. The learning outcomes approach is a natural complement to the learner-centred, goal-directed LBS Program.

A learning outcomes approach was first adapted to the Ontario literacy field by practitioners who wished to move the focus of instruction to whole, meaningful tasks and activities related to the goals of learners. They were reacting to an academic approach to adult literacy instruction that focused on acquiring knowledge unrelated to what a learner might actually do with the knowledge.

The Ontario practitioners developing a learning outcomes approach saw literacy learners as adults who want to be able to apply actively skills and knowledge as learners are developing them. Even within this broad-based development of academic skills, they felt it possible to stress the active application of knowledge to the goals of learners.

The LBS Program recognises that this early work in the literacy field supported the program's direction of providing assistance to adult learners in order to achieve goals related to further training or education, employment, or independence. Several key elements of this work were incorporated into the development of the LBS learning outcomes framework. This learning outcomes framework is now fundamental to the goal-directed, learner-centred approach of the LBS Program.

For the LBS Program, two key components of the learning outcomes approach are demonstrations and success markers.

- Demonstrations are real-life tasks integrating essential skills, knowledge, and behaviours that a learner can perform and the attainment of which may be measured and verified. An example of a demonstration is a prepared activity such as composing a business letter.

- Success markers are the generic skills, knowledge, and behaviours which are essential to success in these demonstrations.

Three types of results from assessments based upon a learning outcomes approach include:

- a record of completion of various valid learning outcomes demonstrations;

- identification of the LBS level—1 through 5—of the generic and transferable skills embedded in these demonstrations, enabling the learner or agency to compare the accomplishments of the learner with other performance standards, such as the levels of the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS), the curriculum of the Ministry of Education, or the Essential Skills of Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC); and

- the record of the results of additional assessment tools and methods, such as tests and portfolios that articulate with the learning outcomes and provide additional important information on the achievements of the learner.

Good assessment practice

Principles of good assessment practice are fundamental to assessment activity in the LBS Program as they are for all educational programs. These principles necessarily underpin the decisions that assessors make in all phases of assessment of learning. As was noted earlier, LBS agencies have received an introduction to these principles in the orientation provided by umbrella organisations in 1999/2000.

There are many sources of advice on good practice in learner assessment. For example, there are two sources that were important in the development of the present

paper. One source is the document Principles for Fair Student Assessment Practices for Education in Canada (Joint Advisory Committee, University of Alberta, Edmonton,1993). The other source is Notes for the Roundtable: Some Thoughts on Learner Assessment (Norm Rowen, 1996). The guidelines presented in both documents complement the learner-centred, goal-directed approach of the LBS Program.

A crucial first principle of good assessment practice is that effective assessment begins from a set of shared educational values or principles. Assessment is not an end in itself—it must reinforce a vision of kinds of learning that we most value for learners and that we are trying to help them achieve.

Shared criteria for comparing assessment results

When LBS agencies begin to use criteria, they will begin to build a shared understanding of assessment results. Where the results are found to be sound and comparable, the agencies base their key programming decisions upon them. These criteria are based upon recent discussions and work in the Ontario literacy field.

What is being assessed?

The starting point for analysing particular assessment results within the framework of common assessment is to define the precise skills, knowledge, and behaviours that are being assessed in a way that is understandable across all LBS agencies. The LBS learning outcomes provide a common language for use in assessment.

We are able to express what is being assessed in terms of:

- integrated skills, knowledge and behaviours – demonstrations; and
- specific skills – learning outcomes domains, component outcomes, skill sets, and success markers.

Moreover we can assign an LBS level to these integrated and specific skills.

In the same way, we can identify the learning that an assessment tool or method effectively assesses. For example, a tool may be designed to test for reading at quite basic levels. Upon investigation, it might be found that the levels addressed correspond to LBS level 1, specifically in decoding skills. This precision in identifying what is being assessed in terms of the common language is the first step in establishing comparability of assessment results.

Who is being assessed?

Certain assessment tools are more effective in assessing the learning of particular

groups of learners. For example, a learner whose goal is employment will respond well to tests and other assessment activities that use workplace-related vocabulary and examples.

Some tools are used by agencies in a particular delivery sector: college, school board, or community agency. The instruments accord with particular instructional or administrative characteristics of the sector. For example, colleges make extensive use of standardised tests for admission.

What is the purpose of the assessment?

Assessment tools are designed to meet particular purposes. A tool that is appropriate for one purpose may be wholly inappropriate for another. This feature means that the choice of the assessment tool that you will use, and when you will use it, must be informed by the purpose of the assessment. The four main purposes for assessment, adapted from Rowen (1996), may be identified as:

1. Assisting in learning and in documenting progress

A primary purpose of assessment is to assist the adult to learn, and to document the adult's progress. This purpose requires that the staff of the agency, in co-operation with learners, gather reliable and appropriate evidence of the learners' accomplishments.

Evidence of this kind allows learners and the LBS agency staff to reflect together on the work that the learners have done in order to:

- assist learners to set and revise learning goals;
- inform learners of their progress;
- adjust instruction to meet the on-going needs of learners; and
- identify successful completion of the program by learners.

Primary goals include aiding instruction as well as informing and motivating learners. Questions of validity and reliability are not as urgent, since the outcome does not have a significant impact on the learner's future, such as ongoing assessment. The tools chosen to assist in instruction and in documenting progress vary from the quite informal, often developed locally, to more formal tools.

2. Developing or improving the learning program

The same information that assists the adult to learn and to document progress also is of value to the practitioner in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of instructional programming, and in making appropriate changes. For example, a review of assessment results may identify gaps in the programming that should be filled by additional learning resources and learning activities.

Where more than one learner is having difficulty with an aspect of the learning, this aspect may become the focus for a more general review and an action plan for improving the programming or the instructional strategies.

3. Facilitating transitions

This function is sometimes referred to as gatekeeping: the assessment results determine eligibility for, and suitability of, entry into LBS agencies or other programs, such as credit study or post-secondary training programs in colleges.

These decisions have important consequences for learners and for LBS agencies. Tools are chosen for their capacity to provide valid and reliable results. There may be multiple measures of the achievements, using several tools, in order to increase confidence in the assessment of learner achievements.

4. Demonstrating accountability

Literacy assessments provide important information for establishing accountability to learners, the public, and government. Again, the decisions made on the basis of assessments for accountability purposes have important consequences. Validity and reliability are consequently crucial.

Formal assessment processes are important for demonstrating accountability to learners. Adult learners need and want to know the progress that they are making in the LBS Program. Assessment results provide feedback to learners regarding personal strengths and challenges. They also increase the motivation of the learner based upon the achievement of their goals.

However, assessment is of interest to the general public; the public is interested in the efficiency and effectiveness of services provided through tax dollars. The public is also increasingly aware that there is a link between economic viability and a nation's literacy levels. For these reasons, it is important for LBS agencies to be able to produce demonstrable results as expressed in learner achievements.

Finally, valid and reliable literacy assessment results for learners in LBS agencies are important for demonstrating accountability to government. The LBS Program is results-based. The services provided are evaluated against demonstrable outcomes. A key outcome is that adults are making progress in their learning toward their goals of employability, further training, or independence.

What assumptions are guiding the assessment?

We previously examined how the assumptions, or principles, of the LBS Program guide

and shape assessment processes. There are many other assumptions about the nature of the literacy learning process that are not related to LBS principles, but which may influence LBS agencies as they assess the work of learners. It is important that LBS agencies are aware of these assumptions in order to choose assessment tools compatible with the agency's learning philosophy.

An example of an assumption that may influence the choice of assessment tools is the belief that reading is primarily about decoding words and sentences, as contrasted with the belief that reading is also fundamentally a process of creating meaning. In this example, the assumption will condition the choice of assessment tools. Rather than relying solely on tools that focus on fluent reproduction of sound-letter correspondences, an agency would also choose tools that assess the ability to gain meaning from text and use it for relevant tasks.

Another example of an assumption that some LBS agencies may hold is that learning is primarily an individual, solitary activity, rather than a process that has a significant social dimension. The assessment tools and methods required by an agency subscribing to this view would be quite different from those required by an agency that assumed learning has an important social element to it.

Another assumption about assessment is that learners are merely tested rather than fully participating in the assessment process. These two assumptions result in very different ideas about who controls the assessment process.

The background assumptions guiding the assessment are often difficult to identify because they are seldom explicit. However, a process of dialogue among LBS agencies brings these assumptions forward for open discussion, enabling LBS agencies to compare the assessment results of other agencies to their own in more comprehensive ways.

What is the phase of the assessment?

Learner assessment is carried on at different times throughout the instructional process. The LBS Program includes initial, on-going, and exit assessment activities. Assessment has varying purposes in these different phases of the LBS Program.

Initial assessment

Initial assessments enable the learner and the staff of an LBS agency to review the prior learning and past achievements of the adult and to identify current competencies. The main purpose of assessments in the initial phase is mainly assisting and documenting learning. However, the purpose of facilitating learner transitions, or gatekeeping, is also involved in the activity of determining the suitability of the program for the learner.

In the initial assessment phase, LBS agency staff and learners:

- determine whether this is the appropriate agency for the learner;
- explore and then set goals for learning;
- examine the required skills and knowledge related to those goals;
- explore the prior learning and present skills and knowledge of the learner that are related to those goals;
- establish the learner's style of learning;
- determine a plan of action; and
- develop an assessment plan to match the action plan.

On-going assessment

The main purpose in this phase of assessment is assisting and documenting learning, but it also includes improving programming and instruction, as well as accountability.

Together, LBS practitioners and learners:

- determine what learners have accomplished, comparing the achievements to the agreed upon goal;
- identify the ways in which they might improve;
- establish the success of the learning programming in meeting learning needs
- inform learners of progress in learning;
- make appropriate changes to learner goals based on this progress; and
- establish the progress of learners for accountability purposes.

On-going assessment is such an integral component of the teaching and learning process that it may be a part of almost every learning session. Literacy instructors and learners decide how much of that on-going assessment activity needs to be tracked (in learner notebooks or in record sheets) or filed (in learner portfolios) in order to match the needs of the learner and the agency. It is important to distinguish between the more frequent on-going assessment of skills, such as a quiz, and the more periodic on-going assessment of significant milestones of learning, such as demonstrations. While both are important, only the latter needs to be communicated in the event of a learner's move to another agency.

Exit assessment

Facilitating learner transitions and accountability are key purposes in the exit assessment phase. When LBS agency staff conduct learner assessments at the end of a learning program, staff and learners:

- establish that learners have achieved certain competencies or qualifications;

- determine whether they have met their goals;
- measure their satisfaction with the learning experience;
- identify the successful completion of the goals set out on the training plan by the learner;
- document learner achievements to facilitate mobility to the next stage of the learner's goal;
- identify gaps in programming that may be filled by additional learning resources and learning activities; and
- identify learner achievements for accountability purposes.

What is the basis of the assessment tool or method?

Certain assessment tools are particularly compatible with the goal-directed, learning outcomes-based approach of the LBS Program. These are the tools and sets of tools that are criterion-referenced, referenced to the standards required by the specific tasks, such as those to be performed by the adult as part of goals.

They contrast with norm-referenced tools, for example, standardised tests, in which results are interpreted by comparing them to the "norm" for the test—the results of a large number of individuals who previously took the test—compared to standards set by the performance of large groups of "similar" adults with the same tool.

Also particularly compatible with the learning outcomes approach are performance-based tools and methods. They provide information about what learners can do with actual tasks, such as those required by their goals. System-based tools provide information about skills in general, without reference to any particular use that may be made of them.

Learning outcomes demonstrations are criterion-referenced in that their performance is judged according to the standards that will be required when the adult carries out the task at work or in everyday life. Demonstrations are performance-based for they relate to an activity that is directly related to the goal of an individual learner.

Some assessment tools have been developed or modified since the introduction of the LBS learning outcomes in order to use explicitly the outcomes and their associated five LBS levels. These tools have been articulated (or keyed) to the LBS learning outcomes. Assessment results based on these tools are easily interpreted across the delivery sites for the LBS Program.

While criterion-referenced, performance-based tools and methods are particularly useful in the LBS Program, no single data-gathering instrument or set of instruments—even those which are both criterion-referenced and performance-based—responds to the full range of purposes for assessing learning in the LBS Program. Assessment tools should be chosen which are appropriate for and compatible with the purpose and

context of assessment. For this reason, the LBS Program does not prescribe a particular assessment approach nor does it endorse a particular assessment tool or set of tools. As a result, norm-referenced tools and system-based tools will probably continue to have a role to play for particular purposes and particular situations.

See Goal-Directed Assessment: An Initial Assessment Process (1998) for guidance when choosing appropriate assessment tools.

What are the standards of validity and reliability of the results?

Validity refers to how well the tool or method measures what it aims to measure. Reliability refers to consistency of result, whether among individuals scoring the result (inter-rater reliability) or for more than one application of the tool by the same learner (test-retest reliability).

Assessment tools being used by LBS agencies vary in the degree to which their results are valid and reliable. Criterion-referenced and performance-based tools, such as learning outcomes demonstrations, are often referred to as alternative or authentic assessment tools. They bring with them particular issues of validity and reliability in terms of standards and evidence. (See Rowen, Norman S. 1996. Notes for Roundtable on Assessment Discussion Paper. Toronto: Metro Toronto Movement for Literacy. P.14..)

As we have seen, the different purposes and phases of assessment call for varying levels of validity and reliability, depending upon the stakes of the decisions to be made. Validity and reliability are especially important when the assessments have broad implications, such as gatekeeping and accountability.

More formal, field-tested instruments generally produce results with high validity and reliability. Informal, locally-produced tools without the same levels of validity and reliability are often quite suitable for decisions with lower stakes, such as determining whether a particular skill has been sufficiently mastered to move on to another learning activity. These informal tools, such as self-assessments, may also be used in conjunction with other tools to provide additional information and enhance validity and reliability through the use of multiple measures of the same performance.

How are the assessment results being scored?

LBS agencies need to make explicit the standards and scales, such as scoring guides (or rubrics), used in scoring learner performances. In this way, there can be a common interpretation across agencies on the meaning of scores based on particular tools. It is of equal importance for learners who are full participants in the assessment process to have the same access to the criteria and performance expectations. This access not only gives them clear information about the nature of the learning task, it

also enables them to judge when they are ready to demonstrate their learning against the agreed upon criteria. Through this process, LBS agencies provide learners with the additional skill of self-assessment—a skill needed in any learning situation.

LBS agencies are able to score learner performance at the analytic (or basic) level using the learning outcomes approach presented in Working With Learning Outcomes. The analytic level refers to the scoring of learner performances based on fine detail—the success markers from the LBS learning outcomes.

The Ontario Literacy Coalition (OLC) has developed two additional levels of performance scoring to assist agencies in scoring performance of LBS learning outcomes in the communications and numeracy domains. (The OLC has taken a different approach with the self-management and self-direction domain.) The features level includes scoring based on more general categories of skills. The holistic (or overall) level of scoring relates to a high-level generalisation of the skills involved in the entire process.

The analytic level of scoring is appropriate for detailed learning issues. The features and holistic levels of scoring produce results that relate to higher order skills and integrated learning.

The OLC's work illustrates the activities of one delivery stream in achieving a common approach to scoring and measuring learner performances.

4. IMPLEMENTING COMMON ASSESSMENT

In the previous chapter, we examined the framework for common assessment.

The fourth element, shared criteria for comparing assessment results, represents a practical tool for LBS agencies as they move toward full implementation of common assessment. Used in the context set by the other three elements—good assessment practice, the principles of the LBS Program, and a learning outcomes approach—these shared criteria assist LBS agencies to both express their own assessment results, and to interpret the assessment results of other agencies. We will now consider how this tool should be used in the context of LBS programming.

Interpreting and comparing

The key challenge for an LBS agency in ensuring common assessment is comparing the assessment results of another LBS agency to the receiving agency's assessment information needs, when learners pass back and forth between them. When enrolling and serving a learner from another agency, an agency needs to be clear about (1) its own assessment approach and, closely related to this approach, (2) the assessment information needs of the agency.

An assessment approach is the overall strategy developed by an LBS agency for deciding when, and how, to use particular assessment tools and methods with learners, based upon a variety of important factors. These factors include the nature of their learners' goals and needs, the purposes of assessment, the needs of the agency, the special characteristics of the delivery sector, as well as the professional training, experience, and orientation of staff. This approach includes such elements as the formal and informal assessment instruments and methods that are used, the phase of assessment when each is applied, and how validity and reliability are ensured.

In order for an LBS agency to consult on assessment with other agencies and to enlarge or modify its assessment approach as necessary, the approach must be coherent: internally logical, consistent, and easily understood. An LBS agency's assessment approach is often not explicitly recorded, but it is advantageous for the agency. In moving to implement the common assessment approach, LBS agencies will require more information about the assessment techniques of other agencies.

The critical assessment information that an LBS agency needs when enrolling and serving a learner from another agency normally includes items such as:

- basic personal data;
- short-term and long-term goals;
- skills gaps in achieving those goals;
- progress to date in filling the gaps;
- current LBS levels in the areas critical to goals;
- validity and reliability of assessment results; and

- learning style.

The receiving agency will need to establish whether the profile of the learner from the referring agency matches its particular delivery niche, based upon the local literacy services plan. This niche specifies the suitability of the delivery agency for different types of learner.

The assessment results for a learner from another agency, and the assessment plan upon which the results are based, will normally be found embedded in the training plan accompanying the learner.

At this point, the receiving agency staff may use the shared criteria for comparing assessment results in order to relate the assessment results from the referring agency to their own critical information needs. For example, the LBS agency may be appropriate for a learner who has been assessed as having the following characteristics:

- able to benefit from working in a small group setting;
- reads and writes at or below LBS level 4; and
- has a goal which is compatible with the delivery agency's mandate.

The agency requires the following information on how the assessment results were obtained:

- assessment results regarding LBS level are at a high level of validity and reliability, since entry to the agency's program is at stake; and
- criterion-referenced assessment to establish areas of learning difficulty, to be used as a basis for developing learning activities.

The two lists specify the information required from the assessment results by the sending agency. The receiving agency staff will next look at the assessment results from the referring agency in terms of how they match these information needs.

In examining the assessment results from the referring agency, some of the questions that the LBS agency staff in the receiving agency might ask would include:

- How well do I understand the presentation of the assessment results in the training plan of the learner?

- Are the critical elements present, but perhaps stated differently from how they are phrased in our agency?

- Based on the information provided, may I say with confidence that this learner is working at the LBS level specified in the training plan?

- Even though our agency does not use a particular tool used by the sending agency, am I familiar enough with it to understand these results and how they relate to our data needs?

- When an original learning outcomes demonstration is used, is there enough information provided about how it is scored for our agency to interpret the results?

- In general, how much of the information required by the receiving agency is present? Some? Most of it? All of it?

The staff of the receiving agency may choose to incorporate the data into its own information system and the learner may begin work when:

- the assessment data is understandable;
- the assessment data matches the critical information needs for the receiving agency; and
- the profile of the learner matches the delivery niche of the LBS agency.

When the first two conditions are met, but the profile of the learner does not match the delivery niche of the agency, the LBS agency staff may consider suggesting referral to a more appropriate agency in the community. However, when the assessment information is inadequate in important respects—including not being understandable or not meeting the critical information needs of the agency—the reasons for this gap need to be identified and solutions need to be developed.

When assessment information is inadequate

When the receiving LBS agency does not have enough assessment information about a learner, the receiving agency needs to identify why it regards the information as inadequate.

Possible reasons why assessment results from another agency are not adequate include:

Unclear communication of results

The sending agency may express the assessment results in unclear format or non-standard language. As well, the assessment information may be sketchy and incomplete.

Unrealistic expectations for results

The receiving agency's critical assessment information may include specialised data elements that are beyond what other agencies normally collect. The concern about reassessment applies to the information that LBS agencies can reasonably be

expected to gather, based on the goals of their learners.

Practices in the sending agency

The assessment practices may be inconsistent with LBS principles, the learning outcomes, or good assessment practice. The sending agency may assume learners are always reassessed at their new agency, even when they arrive with a complete assessment from another LBS agency.

Practices in the receiving agency

The assessment results that an LBS agency receives from another LBS agency may appear to the receiving agency to be inadequate because the staff of the receiving agency are unclear about certain basic principles of assessment or are unfamiliar with particular common assessment tools.

Inter-agency differences

Various issues among LBS agencies may lead to the impression that assessment results are inadequate. The results may be affected by stream-based, regional, or sectoral differences in the ways that assessment is carried on, even though these practices may conform to good assessment practice. Misunderstandings may arise from varying "cultures" of assessment, including different language to express common elements.

Gaps in field development

Sometimes the perception of inadequacy of assessment results may come about because of gaps in the field. For example, there may be a gap in the tools available to the field in a particular domain and LBS level. As well, there could be an uncharted area of assessment that awaits exploration and field development. Finally, there may be issues with the LBS learning outcomes that affects assessments.

Resolving issues of inadequate assessment results

The nature of the solution to inadequate assessment information varies according to cause. The first step in resolving these issues is to answer the question: What is the appropriate level for resolving the issue? There are several suggested levels of response to issues of inadequate information:

May be resolved within the receiving agency

When the issue is that staff in the receiving agency are unclear about assessment principles, or have not encountered certain common assessment tools, the staff might seek learning opportunities in those areas.

May be resolved locally between or among agencies

The LBS agency that receives unclear assessment information might request clarification about the information and explanation of the assessment approach of the sending agency.

May be resolved by networking organisations

To increase clarity in the communication of assessment information, regional networks might gather and share common formats on training plans for recording assessment information.

May be resolved sectorally

A sectoral body might examine sector-wide policies that affect transferability of assessment results.

May be resolved by MTCU

When a problem is identified with the LBS learning outcomes that affects assessment, the ministry might address the concern in a future draft of the outcomes.

There are several possibilities for identifying the issues that may cause referral results to be inadequate for supporting the transitions of learners among LBS Programs and the appropriate level at which it should be addressed. One forum is the local planning and co-ordination process in each community. Another forum, that we will now explore, is the partnering of principal referral partners which is part of LBS expectations for delivery agencies in 1999/2000 and 2000/2001.

Partnering as a process for comparing assessment results

In 1999/2000, each LBS agency partnered with at least one key referral partner in order to compare and understand assessment results. This partnership has many benefits. It will focus agency attention on using learner achievements as the means for the learner's smooth transition to the next step in goal-directed learning. By the end of 2000/2001, LBS learners will move smoothly from an LBS-funded agency to a key referral partner agency, based on assessment results.

The following are expected steps for LBS-funded agency partners:

<u>In 1999/2000</u>

In the first step in 1999/2000 and early 2000/2001, the two agencies informally compare assessment tools, methods, and approaches. They also discuss examples of referrals between the two agencies.

In 2000/2001

In 2000/2001, the representative from each agency to the partnership prepares for a meeting with the agency partner by:

- identifying the agency's own assessment approach, based on the suggested shared criteria for comparing assessment results;
- establishing the agency's critical assessment information needs for a new learner;
- meeting and comparing approaches and information needs;
- analysing results of one or more referrals between agencies; and
- recording successes in matching assessment data to needs, information gaps, and other assessment information issues affecting transitions of learners between the agencies.

The partners create an action plan for the issues that may be resolved between the two agencies. As well, the partners identify a communication plan for bringing issues that cannot be resolved by the partners to the attention of organisations at the appropriate levels. The partners plan and conduct a pilot of two learner transitions to demonstrate the ability of learners to move between the agencies based on their assessment results. After a pathway for smooth transition of learners between the agencies has been established and piloted, the partners meet again to review any issues that have arisen that require action.

An important goal for LBS agencies in this partnering process is to learn from one another. For example, discussing the assessment approaches of their respective agencies enriches their understanding of the practices of both their own agency and that of the other. The partners will encounter new ideas for assessment that they can bring back to their agencies for consideration.

Extending common assessment

In the next stage of common assessment, the process of removing barriers to learner transition will shift from pairs of partnered agencies to the community, region, and province. Project READ Literacy Network, in partnership with Simcoe County Literacy Network, is developing a model of how to assist LBS agencies to share, and to reach agreement upon, assessment practices and results.

Through the development of a common assessment process, LBS agencies will become more aware of the principles and practices of assessment across the field. All LBS organisations—LBS delivery agencies, regional networks, sectoral bodies, umbrella organisations, and service organisations—will develop shared concepts and vocabulary to describe common assessment. The increased awareness and shared vocabulary will assist LBS agencies to communicate to other stakeholders of the LBS system how learners are all assessed and how common assessment supports learner mobility.

By the end of the 2001/2002 fiscal year, LBS-funded agencies will have determined the means by which learner mobility is achieved with all local literacy services planning partners. The key stakeholders of the LBS Program will also be aware of how learner mobility is supported by all LBS partners.

In 2002/2003, when common assessment is fully implemented province-wide, a learner assessed by an LBS delivery agency will be able to move smoothly to any other LBS delivery agency in the province, without being reassessed. Other stakeholders such as employers, Ontario Works, and Job Connect will understand the LBS learning achievements.

Provincial consistency in learning outcomes

The LBS Program is in the initial stages of implementing common assessment. An important challenge of this implementation remains to be addressed: provincial consistency in the interpretation of the LBS learning outcomes and outcomes levels.

Staff of each LBS agency exercise professional judgment in interpreting the meaning of the LBS learning outcomes and the cut-off points of the five LBS levels. Based on their judgments, LBS practitioners score, assess, and recognise the achievements of learners. In turn, learners seek to have their achievements recognised by other training agencies, employers, and other stakeholders of the education and training system.

The LBS learning outcomes represent a set of standards for educational attainment. Over time, as LBS agencies gain experience with the LBS learning outcomes, they will develop more consistent interpretations. The ministry is the ultimate guardian of the accuracy, quality, and consistency of the standards. LBS field consultants, working closely with the LBS agencies, oversee this role.

In the future, MTCU will formally sample the accuracy and consistency of the interpretations of the learning outcomes and the judgments made based upon them. This sampling will answer questions such as: How do we know that the LBS learning outcomes, in reading and interpreting at level 3, signify the skills and the level they claim to signify? Are these outcomes and levels measured and interpreted consistently throughout Ontario?

The timetable for this sampling must take into account the progress of understanding and working with learning outcomes and common assessment in the literacy field. When the field has fully implemented a common assessment process, introducing greater consistency and rigour to the assessments of the learning outcomes, LBS staff will be able to sample and review their use across the province.

5. CONCLUSION

Ensuring that the government direction for adult literacy is successfully implemented depends upon cohesion among all the LBS partners—the ministry, the regional networks, the umbrella groups, the sectoral bodies, the field agencies, and, of course, the learners. Experience has shown that the LBS Program works most effectively when there is a clear understanding of program goals, supported by well-documented research, and facilitated by on-going communication.

The goal of common assessment is to make it possible for learners to move among LBS agencies without being reassessed unnecessarily. Common assessment supports the integrity and transparency of the LBS Program by recognising and encouraging diverse delivery environments and methods. At the same time, it provides a means by which all results are easily understood. Common assessment assists literacy workers with their dual task of providing learner-centred, goal-directed programming and of providing learners with the means by which they will make linkages to a broader training and employment system.

At the heart of common assessment is the comparability of assessment tools and methods. When assessment results are comparable, they are portable or transferable among LBS agencies. LBS agencies are able to interpret the assessment results of a learner from another LBS agency in terms of their own assessment information needs and then incorporate these results into the training plan that the learner and program staff develop.

The LBS Program recognises that a single assessment tool or process cannot serve all of the needs of and purposes for assessment of LBS learners. A variety of tools and methods are available, and each has value for particular applications. LBS delivery agencies are encouraged to use the mix of tools and methods that best meets the needs of their learners, the purposes of the assessment, the needs of the agency, and similar factors.

The process of establishing clear communication about assessment requires LBS agencies and other partners to identify issues that hinder this communication and to work together to resolve them. Some issues will be resolved through action within an agency, some through sector, stream, or field-wide change.

Common assessment represents a fundamental shift for the Ontario literacy field. The achievements of learners will be measured and recorded consistently so they will be of use throughout the LBS system. The ministry will ensure that a realistic pace for this process is established. In this process, working together cannot be optional. However, the challenge is shared in common: to serve learners better by removing obstacles in their paths to improving their lives and society's prospects.

APPENDICES

Appendices 1 – 11

Assessment tools and research projects

Appendix 12

Timetable for Common Assessment

Appendix 13

Further reading

APPENDIX 1

ORGANISATION:
Centre d'alphabetisation Moi, j'apprends

NAME OF THE ASSESSMENT TOOL:
Évaluation sommative-documentée [Documenting exit assessments]

DESCRIPTION:
This tool is a revised version of an exit assessment tool first developed in 1997. Since then, improvements have been made based on practitioner use. This version fully incorporates the LBS learning outcomes, skill sets, and success markers as described in Working with Learning Outcomes (1998).

Évaluation sommative-documentée will allow Francophone practitioners to document the learner's achievements with respect to the goals outlined in the training plan.

This tool will provide the learner with a means of highlighting achievements. It will facilitate the learner's transition from one training program to another.

APPLICABILITY:
Évaluation sommative-documentée is primarily a final assessment tool that addresses LBS levels 1 to 5 in the communications and numeracy domains. It is designed for all types of learners enrolled in a Francophone LBS agency. Goals and time frames are incorporated in the tool.

EVALUATION:
The revised version of this tool will be evaluated by representatives from several Francophone LBS community agencies, Education des Adultes le Carrefour (Ottawa), the Ottawa Carleton School Board, and Le College Boréal.

AVAILABILITY AND DISTRIBUTION:
Évaluation sommative-documentée will be circulated through Alpha-trousse in autumn 2001 for reference purposes.

It will be available from :

Centre d'alphabetisation Moi, j'apprends
1468 Laurier St.
Rockland, Ontario K4K 1C7
(613) 446-5312

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
For more information on Évaluation sommative-documentée, contact Louise Lalonde, Centre d'alphabétisation Moi, j'apprends, at (613) 446-5312.

APPENDIX 2

ORGANISATION:
Le College du Savoir

NAME OF THE ASSESSMENT TOOL:
Les personnes apprenantes face à l'évaluation [Learners and the Assessment Process]

DESCRIPTION:
Les personnes apprenantes face à l'évaluation will evaluate assessment tools commonly used in the assessment process to determine if the tools are sufficiently learner-centred, and adapt tools in order to ensure the assessment process will reconnect the learner to the learning process. Assessment tools may not always be learner-centred because assessments are mainly prepared to manage staff, the learner, and learning activities. It is important for learners to be able to demystify assessment, so that they may put themselves at the centre of the activity. It is the learner who is undergoing the activity: The learner's background determines the training, which leads to continuous assessment and improvement, and finally to an exit assessment.

There are three main criteria that will be used to evaluate the assessment tools:

- how relevant the tool is;
- how much the tool is used, and how the results are used; and
- the ability to compare results.

APPLICABILITY:
Les personnes apprenantes face à l'évaluation will evaluate all relevant Francophone assessment tools, from the learner's perspective.

EVALUATION:
Information on the validation process will be provided by Francophone learners and service providers.

AVAILABILITY AND DISTRIBUTION:
Les personnes apprenantes face à l'évaluation will be available in December 2000 through the following agencies:

Centre FORA
432 Westmount Avenue
Unit H
Sudbury, Ontario P3A 5Z8
(705) 524-3672

AlphaPlus
2040 Yonge Street
3rd Floor
Toronto, Ontario M4S 1Z9
1-800-788-1120

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
For more information on this tool, contact Anna Veltri at:

Le College du Savoir
20 Nelson Street
Room 403
Brampton, Ontario L8X 2M5
(905) 457-7884

APPENDIX 3

ORGANISATION:
Goal: Ontario Literacy for Deaf People (GOLD)

NAME OF THE ASSESSMENT TOOL:
Assessment Instruments: Identifying Current Assessment Tools in the Deaf and Deaf/blind Literacy Community

DESCRIPTION:
Assessment Instruments: Identifying Current Assessment Tools in the Deaf and Deaf/blind Literacy Community will be a database of assessment tools used in the Deaf and Deaf/blind literacy stream. The database will identify not only what assessment tools are available to literacy practitioners in this stream, but the types of tools needed but not yet developed. The database will include material that will help organisations develop new assessment tools as well as improve existing ones. New tools will be added to the database as they are developed and tested.

APPLICABILITY:
The assessment tools contained in the database will be specifically designed for Deaf and Deaf/blind learners working toward further education, employment, or independence. The three domains of learning will be addressed. There will be a strong focus on communications and numeracy. Self-management and self-direction tools will also be included as they become available. The emphasis will be as follows:

Communications:

- read with understanding for various purposes; and
- write clearly to express ideas.

The "Speak and listen effectively" component will be replaced with an "Express and receive messages through the eyes effectively" component.

Numeracy:

- perform basic operations with numbers;
- use measurement for various purposes;
- solve geometric problems;
- manage data and probability; and
- use patterning and algebra.

Self Management/Self-Direction:

- become a self-directed learner; and
- set and monitor short and long-term goals.

GOLD is focusing on this domain in order to develop demonstration activities which will be included in the database.

EVALUATION:
Each assessment tool will be evaluated against the learning outcomes approach to ensure that it is at the appropriate LBS level. The tool will then be added to the online database for all Deaf literacy agencies to use. Further evaluations will be conducted by Deaf literacy agencies as they access the database and provide information to GOLD. The database will become a working forum with revisions to the material made by and for Deaf and Deaf/blind practitioners to use in their programming. In order to elicit constructive responses, a survey attachment will be added to all assessment tools included in the database.

AVAILABILITY AND DISTRIBUTION:
The database will be accessible through the GOLD website in November 2000. Printed copies of new tools will be provided as they become available.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
For more information on Assessment Instruments: Identifying Current Assessment Tools in the Deaf and Deaf/blind Literacy Community, contact:

Beth Bourgeois
Assessment Tools Co-ordinator
Goal: Ontario Literacy for Deaf People
150 Central Park Drive
Suite 106
Brampton, Ontario L6T 2T9
(905) 458-0499 TTY (via BRS 1-800-855-0511)
E-mail: beth@deafliteracy.ca

APPENDIX 4

ORGANISATION:
Kingston Literacy

NAME OF THE ASSESSMENT TOOL:
Assessment Kit (Ongoing Assessment Tracking Model for Volunteer Tutoring Programs)

DESCRIPTION:
This assessment kit is specifically designed to meet the needs of volunteer, one-to-one tutoring programming and is based on successful recording methods that have evolved in the Kingston Literacy agency. The original kit was developed in 1996 with an advisory group of students, tutors, and staff who agreed that a user-friendly, manageable method to track learning was needed. The kit's aim is to better recognise student achievement, encourage more student input, provide a framework to guide pairs through the process of on-going assessment, and improve staff support. It is a participatory model with a structure and process encompassing initial assessment and a learning plan that includes:

- long-term and learning goals;
- learning strengths, needs, and strategies;
- weekly record keeping;
- a progress report; and
- portfolio development.

In 1997, the kit was adapted to integrate LBS levels 1 to 3; in 1999 it was adapted to integrate levels 1 to 5. Current revisions, to be completed in June 2000, involve adapting the kit to include an LBS training plan and to integrate a demonstrations component.

APPLICABILITY:
Assessment Kit includes user-friendly tracking sheets for use by students and tutors, correlated to all LBS learning outcomes in the communications and numeracy domains, levels 1 to 5. The tracking sheets for reading and writing learning outcomes are linked to the Ontario Literacy Coalition (OLC) level descriptions. (See Appendix 6.) The level descriptions are reformatted in the kit to mirror the tracking sheets and are a tool for practitioners to record learning success in a language that provides the necessary link back to the learning outcomes approach.

The kit may be used with all one-to-one learners in the Anglophone stream at LBS levels 1 to 5, including learners with developmental disabilities and learning disabilities. The model has been implemented in small groups with learners from levels 1 to 3, and has also been used with Deaf students tutored one-to-one. The kit accommodates learners' goals relating to current employment, gaining employment, further education or training, or independence.

Following a screening assessment, learners are engaged in an in-depth initial

assessment from six to eight hours, before being matched with a tutor. A formal, ongoing assessment takes place every 12 sessions or every three months, involving the learner, tutor, and assessor.

The initial assessment orients the learner to the assessment process and provides a model for the volunteer tutor to follow.

The underlying philosophy of the kit is that it belongs to the learner: it establishes the learner and tutor as equal partners; reflects and embodies learner strengths, achievement, and self-reflection; includes detailed anecdotal records; and is learner-centred, not curriculum-based.

The challenge in creating the kit was to develop materials that could be easily understood by students and volunteer tutors while at the same time supporting the goals of program accountability and the establishment of a provincial common language based on the LBS learning outcomes approach. A framework for easy manageability was also crucial.

The manual includes a how-to-use-the-kit section, a sample kit as completed by a learner/tutor pair, a tutor-training workshop component based on a student profile, and an appendix of supplementary materials with masters for photocopying.

Upon request, Kingston Literacy delivers a one-day training course in the use of the kit for people who are unfamiliar with it. A half-day training course for current users—focusing on newly revised material and the five levels of learning outcomes—is also available. Regional networks may consider requesting these workshops for conferences.

EVALUATION:
After the kit was designed, it was tested internally with matched pairs and tutoring co-ordinators at three Kingston Literacy sites, and was subsequently evaluated by learners and tutors at regular intervals. Revisions were made in consultation with the project advisory group.

In September 1998, Assessment Kit was included in the report Review and Evaluation of the Assessment Tools and Instruments Currently Being Used by Practitioners, prepared by Neil Graham for the Ontario Literacy Coalition.

In March 1999, Community Literacy Ontario conducted an evaluative survey with 18 diverse LBS community agencies which had previously used the kit for 10 to12 months. In 1999-2000, the kit was piloted for six months in four LBS community agencies differing in size, geography, and type of learner.

AVAILABILITY AND DISTRIBUTION:
The revised kit will be available in September 2000. Revised material is free to previous purchasers of the kit. New purchasers may order the kit from:

Kingston Literacy
88 Wright Crescent
Kingston, Ontario K7L 4T9
(613) 547-2012

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information on Assessment Kit, contact Sheila Round, Kingston Literacy, (613) 547-2012, fax (613) 547 2024, or kinglit@kos.net.

APPENDIX 5

ORGANISATION:
Literacy Link Eastern Ontario (LLEO)

NAME OF THE ASSESSMENT TOOL:
Common Assessment of Basic Skills (CABS)

DESCRIPTION:
CABS is a document designed to help guide assessors through the assessment process. It contains sample questions, forms, and demonstrations that assessors may use during an assessment. The demonstrations are tied to the five levels of LBS learning outcomes. CABS may be used with other assessment tools or may be used independently.

The first version of CABS was developed by Rose Strohmaier in 1995. As the direction of the Ontario literacy field progressed, a second edition of CABS was developed by Judith Fox Lee in 1997. When LBS learning outcomes were introduced, the field indicated that CABS needed to be updated in order to reflect the five LBS levels.

In 1999, revision work to update CABS to reflect the five levels of learning outcomes began. This work was done by Rose Strohmaier and Judith Fox Lee. The third edition has been rigorously tested. Field trials were conducted by 25 LBS agencies throughout Ontario, covering all sectors.

APPLICABILITY:
CABS is designed to help assessors, practitioners, and tutors perform more standardised and accurate assessments for all types of learners in the Anglophone stream. The tool helps assessors to identify learners' goals and develop training plans.

CABS addresses LBS levels 1 to 5. This edition emphasises the communications and numeracy domains.There is a wide range of demonstrations and topics which may be used to administer either a quick screen or an in-depth assessment. This edition also focuses on how users can create their own demonstrations.

The optimal phase for this tool is initial assessment, although it may also be used for on-going and exit assessments.

EVALUATION:
Previous editions of CABS have been used by many agencies and assessors for six years. After the initial revision for this edition, the CABS document was proofread by a professional assessor and proofreader, and then sent out for field trials to 25 LBS agencies from all sectors. The comments, suggestions, and corrections by the Ontario literacy field have been incorporated into the document.

AVAILABILITY AND DISTRIBUTION:
The third edition of CABS will be available in April 2000. Copies may be purchased

from:

Literacy Link Eastern Ontario
830 A Development Drive
Bayridge Plaza
Kingston, Ontario K7M 5V7
(613) 389-5307

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
For more information, contact Denise Sabatini, Executive Director, Literacy Link Eastern Ontario, (613) 389-5307.

APPENDIX 6

ORGANISATION:
The Ontario Literacy Coalition (OLC)

NAME OF THE ASSESSMENT TOOL:
Level Descriptions for LBS Learning Outcomes

DESCRIPTION:
Level Descriptions for LBS Learning Outcomes contains descriptions of each of the five LBS Levels and is based on the document Working with Learning Outcomes (1998). This manual describes levels 1 to 5 for the outcomes in the communications domain: read with understanding for various purposes, write clearly to express ideas, and speak and listen effectively; as well as five levels for the outcomes in the numeracy domain. Unleveled criteria for assessing skills in the domain of self-management and self-direction is also included.

The Level Descriptions provide LBS practitioners with a features (or components) scale and a summary (or overall) scale to better understand and assess each outcome of each domain within a learning outcomes approach.

Four teams of LBS practitioners with extensive assessment and teaching experience from community, college, and school boards across Ontario were involved in this project. Each team also benefited from the experience of consultants with particular expertise related to research and development in their respective areas.

APPLICABILITY:
Level Descriptions for LBS Learning Outcomes provides descriptions of levels 1-5 for each outcome in the communications domain and the numeracy domain. Criteria for the assessment of skills in the self-management and self-direction domain are also included.

The level descriptions and material are adaptable to learner goals and applicable for all learners in the Anglophone stream working on skills in the three LBS learning outcomes domaines.

EVALUATION:
The Level Descriptions for LBS Learning Outcomes manual was extensively reviewed by a number of LBS practitioners in literacy programs across Ontario and across all sectors. As well, the communications and numeracy scales were reviewed by experienced educational consultants to ensure consistency with the LBS Levels as they are described in the Working with Learning Outcomes document. Revisions to the scales and material were made based on this feedback.

AVAILABILITY AND DISTRIBUTION:
Level Descriptions for LBS Learning Outcomes will be produced and distributed by September 2000. This package will be available for wide distribution to LBS agencies

across Ontario and may be obtained from:

The Ontario Literacy Coalition
365 Bloor Street East
Suite 1003
Toronto, Ontario M4W 3L4
(416) 963-5787

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
For more information on this project, contact Susan Toews, Field Development Co-ordinator, Ontario Literacy Coalition, (416) 963-5787 ext. 28.

APPENDIX 7

ORGANISATION:
The Ontario Literacy Coalition (OLC)

NAME OF THE ASSESSMENT TOOL:
Common Writing Assessment

DESCRIPTION:
Common Writing Assessment, a writing assessment instrument and scoring guide for six levels was developed by the George Brown College/National Literacy Secretariat project in 1996-97. It has been revised to correspond to the LBS levels as outlined in Working with Learning Outcomes (1998) and the OLC level descriptions. (See Appendix 6.)

APPLICABILITY:
This performance-based, authentic writing assessment tool is appropriate for and effective in assessing the descriptive and persuasive writing skills of LBS learners in the Anglophone stream, from LBS levels 2 to 5. Additionally, it is useful for assessing writing performance of learners who are "ready for post-secondary" and "clearly post-secondary."

The tool provides four scales. Three scales identify the important features, or components, of skillful writing:

- focus, development, and organisation;
- voice, vocabulary, and sentence variety; and
- grammar and mechanics.

The fourth, summary scale integrates these three features, providing a holistic, or overall, description of each level of writing, using the language of the learning outcomes approach and the OLC level descriptions wherever possible.

Common Writing Assessment will be useful for initial and ongoing as well as exit assessment in a variety of programs. However, it will provide assessors and practitioners with a means of assessing writing according to the LBS levels. It will also inform instructors on the important features of writing in order to aid in individualised curriculum planning. The tool may be used with learners from levels 2 to 5 when their goal is to improve their writing skills. The tool should be particularly useful for learners who are working toward further training and education, where skill at formulating and organising ideas into a short composition is necessary.

EVALUATION:
The instrument has been piloted with 250 learners through 12 LBS agencies: five colleges, three school boards, and four community agencies. Each writing sample was scored and then anonymously re-scored for inter-rater reliability. The pilot confirmed that the revised instrument is both a valid and reliable measure of learner

writing. The results also showed that there is a strong correspondence between the LBS levels as defined in the scoring guide and the LBS levels as identified through other assessments used by practitioners, particularly for LBS learners in community agencies and school boards.

AVAILABILITY AND DISTRIBUTION:
In August 2000, a final product—consisting of the revised Common Writing Assessment Instrument, a pilot report, and other information—will be published and distributed. OLC plans to make training available on the use of the instrument on an as-needs, fee-for-service basis across the province. The tool may be obtained from:

The Ontario Literacy Coalition
365 Bloor Street East
Suite 1003
Toronto, Ontario M4W 3L4
(416) 963-5787

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
For more information on this product, contact Susan Toews, Field Development Coordinator, Ontario Literacy Coalition, (416) 963-5787.

APPENDIX 8

ORGANISATION:
The Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB)

NAME OF THE ASSESSMENT TOOL:
Outcomes-based Assessment – Sample Demonstration Tasks

DESCRIPTION:
This outcomes-based assessment tool is a series of sample demonstrations to help teachers devise demonstration tasks specific to their own students' goals.

The sample demonstration tasks in this tool were produced in response to a request to expand work initially done by teachers in the Ottawa Board of Education Adult Basic Education program (Sample Outcome Based Assessment Tasks, 1996). The original demonstrations, which were designed to accommodate three learning levels, were expanded to accommodate the increased number of levels required by LBS and correspond with the LBS learning outcomes approach and the Ontario Literacy Coalition level descriptions. As there are no LBS level 5 students in the current OCDSB LBS program, the demonstrations were produced for levels 1 to 4. Each task is presented with details of performance indicators and criteria for successful completion of the task.

APPLICABILITY:
Outcomes-based Assessment – Sample Demonstration Tasks contains sample tasks in reading, writing, numeracy, and speaking and listening skills, together with a section designed to help students set goals and become self-directed learners. There are also some sample demonstrations that use computers for those agencies where this use is appropriate. The tasks are for use with LBS levels 1 to 4.

The tool is designed to be used in regular LBS classes in the Anglophone stream. The tasks are not complicated, and teachers may adapt them to their own learners' goals.

Outcomes-based Assessment – Sample Demonstration Tasks is most suitable for use as a guide to a student's progress. It may be used to indicate to both learner and teacher that progress has been made toward the student's stated goal.

EVALUATION:
The sample demonstration tasks were tested in the literacy field by teachers in the LBS Program delivered by OCDSB. Testers also included some teachers in the Adaptive Learning Program. The helpful comments and suggestions of all the testers were incorporated into the revised version of the tasks. The teachers who produced the tasks also tested them with their own students, modifying the tasks where necessary.

AVAILABILITY AND DISTRIBUTION:
Copies of Outcomes-based Assessment – Sample Demonstration Tasks may be ordered from:

The Ottawa-Carleton District School Board
Continuing Education Centre
515 Cambridge Street South
Ottawa, Ontario K1S 4H9
(613) 239-2656

FOR MORE INFORMATION
For more information on of Outcomes-based Assessment – Sample Demonstration Tasks, contact Christine Futter, Continuing Education Centre, (613) 239-2656.

APPENDIX 9

ORGANISATION:
Project READ Literacy Network

NAME OF THE ASSESSMENT TOOL:
Taking the First Step: An LBS Referral Assessment

DESCRIPTION:
Taking the First Step is a referral assessment tool designed to help adults find an appropriate LBS agency. The tool provides a snapshot of a learner's current literacy and basic numeracy skills, based on information provided in an informal interview and the learner's performance on a selection of assessment activities. Taking the First Step includes a report on the development of the assessment tool, an assessment process, hints on how to modify the tool, and a selection of assessment activities. An assessor's guide and samples of forms are also provided.

APPLICABILITY:
The purpose of Taking the First Step is to help provide learners with a referral to an appropriate LBS agency in order to further long-term goals in employment, education and training, or self-improvement. It is suitable for all members of the community in the Anglophone stream, including referrals from Ontario Works and Human Resource Development Canada (HRDC).

The tool is best suited for referral/replacement assessment, but may be modified for initial, ongoing, or exit assessment.

Taking the First Step is suitable for use with the communications and numeracy domains. Particular attention is paid to the following component outcomes:

Communications:

- read with understanding for a variety of purposes;
- write clearly to express ideas; and
- speak and listen effectively.

Numeracy:

- perform basic operations with numbers; and
- use measurement for various purposes.

The tool addresses LBS levels 1 to 5 for communications and levels 1 to 3 for numeracy.

EVALUATION:
Taking the First Step has been validated against the LBS Program's learning outcomes, and the OLC level descriptions. A selection of the assessment activities has been

reviewed by practitioners in Waterloo Region and Wellington County, as well as by several OLC resource co-ordinators. Further testing will take place prior to general release.

AVAILABILITY AND DISTRIBUTION:
Copies of Taking the First Step may be ordered from:

Project READ Literacy Network
591 Lancaster St. W.
Kitchener, Ontario N2K 1M5
(519) 570-3054

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
For more information on Taking the First Step, contact Yvonne Roussy at Project Read, (519) 570-3054.

APPENDIX 10

ORGANISATION:
Toronto District School Board

NAME OF THE ASSESSMENT TOOL:
Special Needs Assessment Procedures (SNAP)

DESCRIPTION:
The objective of SNAP is to provide LBS literacy assessors and intake personnel with the skills and knowledge to assess and place adults with disabilities, and to develop clear procedures to ensure these learners have access to appropriate literacy services.

Currently, different LBS agencies may assess and place adults with disabilities into classes in ways that are not consistent. A better understanding of client needs and services available will help to ensure appropriate referrals.

APPLICABILITY:
The SNAP manual is intended to help LBS literacy assessors adapt their current assessment procedures in order to give equal access to adults with disabilities, while maintaining the integrity of the assessment within the learning outcomes environment. The manual also helps assessors identify goals for working with these learners.

EVALUATION:
LBS learners, literacy assessors, and agency administrators were interviewed regarding barriers that arise during assessment, and a reference group was established to review the material and identify key issues. A draft of the manual was reviewed by members of participating organisations, and by additional readers, including literacy practitioners in the Deaf, Native, and Francophone streams.

AVAILABILITY AND DISTRIBUTION:
SNAP is available in hard copy from:

Rita Paonessa
Toronto District School Board
3 Tippett Road
Toronto, Ontario M3H 2V1
(416) 395-6571

The manual is also available online at:
www.torque.net/~bpd/dev/snap

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
For more information on SNAP, contact Patricia Hatt, Patricia Hatt Consulting Services, (416) 485-0518.

APPENDIX 11

ORGANISATION:
Wellington County Learning Centre

NAME OF THE ASSESSMENT TOOL:
Skills Level Checklist (SLC)

DESCRIPTION:
This assessment tool establishes the learner's present LBS level by identifying current skills. It is written in terminology easily understood by the agency co-ordinator, tutor, or learner. Skills are listed on the left with three columns to the right:

- Yes, I can do this task;
- I need some practice; and
- Proof/demo# .

The book is divided into five levels, then further divided into outcomes and skills.

As an on-going assessment tool, the SLC tracks learner progress by maintaining a record of current skills. The assessment may be done with the learner when the co-ordinator and tutor are present during a regular session. Together they go through the skills in the book and plan demonstrations as proof. It is intended to be used every three or four months, when the learner is ready and wants to be reassessed. Sample demonstrations are included.

APPLICABILITY:
The SLC is an ongoing assessment tool that may become part of a learner's portfolio. It may also be used as an initial or exit assessment tool. It is learner-centred and geared toward LBS community agencies in the Anglophone stream that use one-to-one tutoring. The SLC is ideally suited for learners in LBS levels 1 to 3; however, it has been used in non-LBS programs as well.

The self-management/self direction domain and all five levels of the communications and numeracy domains are addressed. Within the domains, particular learning outcomes have been specified, and skill sets have been broken down into categories and itemised as success markers.

Learner goals including further education, employment, or independence can be supported by ongoing use of the SLC.

EVALUATION:
The SLC has been evaluated and tested by several different agencies across Ontario. The following organisations took part in field tests: Wellington County Learning Centre; Walkerton and District Literacy Council; Action Read in Guelph; Durham Deaf Services; Espanola Learning Centre; and NoKee Kwa Literacy Initiatives in London.

AVAILABILITY AND DISTRIBUTION:
The SLC may be purchased at $10.00 per copy from:

Wellington County Learning Centre
124B George Street
P.O. Box 256
Arthur, Ontario N0G 1A0
(519) 848-3462
Fax: (519) 848-9354
E-mail: literacy@freespace.net

FOR MORE INFORMATION
For more information on the SLC, contact Laurie Few, Wellington County Learning Centre, (519) 848-3462.

APPENDIX 12

Timetable for Common Assessment

Timeframe	Activity
March 2000	• Learners move smoothly from one LBS agency to at least one key LBS referral partner, based upon their assessment results
2000 - 2001	• Delivery agencies connect with a broader range of stakeholders, such as Ontario Works and Job Connect delivery agencies in order to communicate how learners move smoothly through the LBS system
March 2002	• Learners move among all LBS delivery agencies which are local literacy services planning partners. Key stakeholders of the LBS Program aware of how learner mobility is supported by all LBS local literacy services planning partners
2001 -2002	• Agencies assisted by regional networks and umbrella organisations participate in a regional analysis of assessment results in order to extend common assessment
2002 - 2003	• Common assessment fully implemented province-wide and LBS learners able to move among all LBS delivery agencies across the province. Stakeholders such as Ontario Works and Job Connect will understand the LBS learning achievements

The ministry recognises that implementing a common assessment approach in the diverse Ontario literacy field will vary by LBS agency. The expectations of individual LBS agencies for the implementation timetable for each agency is governed by the time and resources available. However, in order to provide a timely and integrated implementation of the common assessment approach and to establish the groundwork for the next phase of RALS, LBS agencies will need to develop individual timetables, within their LBS commitments and projections, with their LBS field consultant.

APPENDIX 13

Further Reading:

1. Canadian Psychological Association/Société canadienne de psychologie. 1987. Guidelines for Educational and Psychological Testing. Ottawa.
2. Joint Advisory Committee, Centre for Research in Applied Measurement and Evaluation, University of Alberta. 1993. Principles for Fair Student Assessment Practices for Education in Canada. Edmonton, Alberta.
3. Ministry of Education and Training. 1998. Working With Learning Outcomes. Validation Draft. Toronto.
4. Ministry of Education and Training. 1997. Goal-Directed Assessment: An Initial Assessment Process. Toronto.
5. Ontario Literacy Coalition. March 1998. "Learner Assessment." In Inside Outcomes, No. 4. Toronto.
6. Rowen, Norman S. 1998. More Walls Than Doors: A Discussion Paper. Toronto: Metro Toronto Movement for Literacy.
7. Rowen, Norman S. 1996. Notes for Roundtable on Assessment Discussion Paper. Toronto.
8. Rowen, Norman S. 1995. Renewing Entry Assessment: Report of the George Brown College Assessment Group. Toronto.
9. Victoria READ Society. 1999. Report of the Proceedings of the Conference: Recognizing and Promoting Literacy Outcomes. Victoria, British Columbia.